

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, VS  
SUBJ: MR3 RESPONDENTS AMBIVALENT ON RESTORATION OF  
DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES

FOLG SENT ACTION SAIGON INFO CANTHO DANANG NHATRANG 15 AUG 73  
REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO

QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, VS  
SUBJ: MR3 RESPONDENTS AMBIVALENT ON RESTORATION OF  
DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES

SUMMARY: MR3 MOBILE DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH TEAM CONDUCTED JULY 24  
AUG 4 SURVEY OF 125 RELATIVELY WELL INFORMED RESPONDENTS IN  
GVN CONTROLLED AREAS OF GIA DINH, LONG AN AND TAY NINH PROVINCES  
ON ATTITUDES TOWARD RESTORATION OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES IN SVN  
WHICH IS CALLED FOR BY JAN 27 PARIS AGREEMENT AND JUNE 13  
JOINT COMMUNIQUE. FIFTY SIX PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS ADMITTED  
THAT THEY SAW CONTRADICTION BETWEEN IMMEDIATE RESTORATION OF  
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DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES AND MOVEMENT TOWARD GENERAL ELECTION WITH  
COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION CALLED FOR BY AGREEMENT-COMMUNIQUE,  
AND ANTI COMMUNIST CONSTITUTION AND POLICIES OF RVN; AMONG 44  
PERCENT WHO OFFERED NO COMMENTS ON THE QUESTION, SURVEYORS

THOUGHT MANY SHARED VIEWS OF MAJORITY BUT PREFERRED NOT TO STATE THEM OPENLY. NEVERTHELESS, OF THOSE WHO SAW CONTRADICTION, 43 PERCENT THOUGHT GVN SHOULD TEMPORARILY PUT ASIDE CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS CONFLICTING WITH AGREEMENT-COMMUNIQUE IN ORDER TO MOVE TOWARD POLITICAL SOLUTION, WHILE 57 PERCENT SUGGESTED VAGUELY THAT CONSTITUTION AND AGREEMENT SHOULD SOMEHOW BE "HARMONIZED". RESPONDENTS WERE ALMOST EVENLY DIVIDED OVER WHETHER RESTORATION OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES WOULD BE GOOD FOR SVN PEOPLE; 32 PERCENT SAID YES, FOR CLASSICAL LIBERAL REASONS; 36 PERCENT SAID NO, FEARING COMMUNISTS WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT; AND 32 PERCENT OFFERED NO COMMENTS. IN POLITICAL STRUGGLE, GVN'S PRINCIPAL STRENGTHS WERE PERCEIVED AS ITS ARMED FORCES, ITS RELATIVELY FREE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SYSTEM, AND ITS ABILITY TO ATTRACT FOREIGN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM FREE WORLD COUNTRIES; ITS PRINCIPAL WEAKNESSES WERE SEEN AS CORRUPTION, TROOP MISBEHAVIOR, WEAK PROPAGANDA AT HOME AND ABROAD, HEAVY AND UNJUST TAXES, AND DEVELOPED INDUSTRY AND EXCESSIVE UNEMPLOYMENT. RESPONDENTS SAW NLF AS STRONG IN PROPAGANDA AND IN CADRE LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING, BUT WEAK IN THE NASTY IMPRESSION CREATED BY THEIR IRON FISTED POLICIES, THE FAILURE OF THEIR ARMED FORCES TO ACHIEVE ANY VICTORIES, AND THE PARASITIC CHARACTER OF THE ECONOMY IN COMMUNIST CONTROLLED AREAS OF SOUTH VIET-NAM. IF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES WERE RESTORED IN SVN, 48 PERCENT PLURALITY THOUGH NLF WOULD BENEFIT MOST BY EXPANDING ITS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STRUGGLE ACTIVITIES, WHILE ONLY 32 PERCENT THOUGH GVN WOULD GAIN MOST, BECAUSE GOOD LIKE UNDER RVN RULE WOULD ATTRACT PEOPLE LIVING UNDER COMMUNISM. TWENTY PERCENT OFFERED NO COMMENTS. COMMENT: SURVEY INDICATES LARGE MEASURE OF AWARENESS AMONG THESE RELATIVELY KNOWLEDGEABLE AND PRO-GVN RESPONDENTS, OF FACT THAT THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN AGREEMENT-COMMUNIQUE AND RVN'S CONSTITUTION AND CURRENT POLICIES, COUPLED WITH UNDERSTANDING OF WHY RVN MUST BE FLEXIBLE IN ORDER TO REACH POLITICAL SOLUTION. ON OTHER HAND A PLURALITY ARE PREPARED FOR ANTI COMMUNIST REASONS, TO PUT OFF RESTORATION OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES, EVEN THOUGH THIS APPEARS TO OBJECTIVE OBSERVER TO BE CONTRARY TO AGREEMENT AND COMMUNIQUE; BUT A SIGNIFICANT MINORITY ARGUE THAT MORE DEMOCRACY COULD BE IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INTEREST OF SVN PEOPLE AND RVN. JUDGEMENT THAT GVN'S PRINCIPAL WEAKNESS IS CORRUPTION IS ANOTHER INDICATION OF WIDESPREAD RECOGNITION AMONG VIETNAMESE OF ALL CLASSES THAT THIS IS THE CASE. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

1. SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED IN 12 HAMLETS OF SIX VILLAGES OF FIVE DISTRICTS OF GIA DINH, LONG AN, AND TAY NINH PROVINCES FROM JULY 24 THROUGH AUG 4. THE 125 RESPONDENTS INCLUDED 98 MALES AND 27 FEMALES; 70 AGED 25-40, 34 AGED 41-60, AND 21 OVER 60; 40 OFFICE EMPLOYEES, 30 FARMERS, 21 SERVICEMEN, 17 NOTABLES, NINE MERCHANTS, AND EIGHT LABORERS; 40 BUDDHISTS, 35 ANCESTOR WORSHIPPERS, 16 CATHOLICS, AND 30 CAODAISTS. SAMPLE WAS GENRALLY

BETTER EDUCATED AND MORE POLITICALLY AWARE THAN AVERAGE OF VIETNAMESE POPULATION.

FINDINGS WERE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Q. THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM HAS SIGNED THE PARIS AGREEMENT OF JAN 73 AND THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF JUNE 73 WHICH PROVIDES DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIET-NAM. AT THE SAME TIME, THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM FORBIDS COMMUNISM IN ANY FORM. IS THERE A CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE CONSTITUTION, AND THE AGREEMENT AND THE COMMUNIQUE?

A. YES--56 PERCENT (70 RESPONDENTS, INCLUDING THREE FARMERS, 30 OFFICE EMPLOYEES, 15 SERVICEMEN, 17 NOTABLES, THREE MERCHANTS AND TWO WORKERS) THOUGHT THE RVN HAD VIOLATED ITS OWN CONSTITUTION AS WELL AS PRES THIEU'S "FOUR NO" POLICY BY SIGNING THE AGREEMENT, UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE BIG POWERS. NO COMMENT--44 PERCENT (55 RESPONDENTS INCLUDING 27 FARMERS, 10 OFFICE EMPLOYEES, SIX SERVICEMEN, SIX MERCHANTS AND SIX WORKERS), MANY OF WHOM SEEMED NOT TO WANT TO STATE OPENLY THAT THEY THOUGHT THERE WAS A CONTRADICTION.

2. Q. IF THERE IS A CONTRADICTION WHAT SHOULD THE RVN DO? (ASKED ONLY OF THE 70 RESPONDENTS WHO ANSWERED YES TO QUESTION 1).

A. DISREGARD PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION WHICH CONFLICT WITH THE AGREEMENT AND THE COMMUNIQUE--43 PERCENT (30 RESPONDENTS INCLUDING ONE FARMER, 15 OFFICER WORKERS, FIVE SERVICEMEN, EIGHT NOTABLE AND THREE LABORERS), WHO SUGGESTED THAT THE RVN GO AHEAD WITH A GENERAL ELECTION WITH NLF PARTICIPATION AS PRESCRIBED BY THE AGREEMENT, THEN AMEND THE CONSTITUTION TO COINCIDE WITH THE NEW SITUATION.

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HARMONIZE THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE AGREEMENT AND THE COMMUNIQUE -- 57 PERCENT (40 RESPONDENTS INCLUDING TWO FARMERS, 17 OFFICE WORKERS, 10 SERVICEMEN, NINE NOTABLE AND TWO WORKERS).

3. Q. GENERALLY SPEAKING, DO YOU THINK THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES WOULD BE GOOD OR BAD FOR THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM?

A. YES -- 32 PERCENT (40 RESPONDENTS INCLUDING FIVE FARMERS, 15 OFFICE EMPLOYEES, 10 SERVICEMEN, SEVEN NOTABLES, TWO MERCHANTS AND ONE WORKER), WHO THOUGHT THAT A COMPLETE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES IN RVN WOULD BENEFIT THE PEOPLE UNDER GVN CONTROL, AND ATTRACT THE PEOPLE LIVING IN COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED AREAS OF SVN. THESE RESPONDENTS WERE GENERALLY CLASSICAL LIBERALS WHO EXTOLLED VIRTUES OF FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY.

NO -- 36 PERCENT (45 RESPONDENTS INCLUDING FIVE FARMERS, 20 OFFICE EMPLOYEES, 10 SERVICEMEN AND 10 NOTABLES), WHO THOUGHT THAT IN THE CURRENT UNSTABLE SITUATION, THE COMMUNISTS WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF DEMOCRATIC FREEDOMS IN VARIOUS WAYS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR POSITION.

NO COMMENT -- 32 PERCENT (40 RESPONDENTS)

4. Q. IN A POLITICAL STRUGGLE, WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE TWO SOUTH VIETNAMESE PARTIES?

A. RVN STRENGTHS -- RVNAF (32 PERCENT), RELATIVELY LIBERAL POLITICAL SYSTEM (36 PERCENT), RELATIVELY FREE ECONOMIC SYSTEM (20 PERCENT), POTENTIAL FOR POST-WAR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM FREE WORLD NATIONS (12 PERCENT).

RVN WEAKNESSES -- CORRUPTION AND TROOP MISBEHAVIOR (48 PERCENT), HEAVY AND UNJUST TAXES (24 PERCENT), WEAK PROPAGANDA AT HOME AND ABROAD (16 PERCENT), WEAK INDUSTRY AND UNEMPLOYMENT 12 PERCENT).

NLF STRENGTHS-- EFFECTIVE PROPAGANDA (40 PERCENT), TRAINING AND LEADERSHIP OF CADRE (28 PERCENT), NO COMMENT (32 PERCENT).

NLF WEAKNESSES -- IRON - FISTED POLICIES WHICH TERRORIZE PEOPLE (56 PERCENT), COMPARATIVE WEAKNESS OF VC ARMED FORCES (24 PERCENT), ECONOMIC WEAKNESS (20 PERCENT).

5. Q. IF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES WERE RESTORED THROUGHOUT SOUTH VIETNAM, WHICH SIDE WOULD HAVE THE MOST TO GAIN? WHY?

A. NLF -- 48 PERCENT (60 RESPONDENTS INCLUDING 12 FARMERS, 28 OFFICE EMPLOYEES, 12 SERVICEMEN, SIX NOTABLES, AND TWO MERCHANTS), WHO EMPHASIZED THAT THE NLF WOULD EXPAND ITS POLITICAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND ECONOMIC STRUGGLE ACTIVITIES WITH AN ULTIMATE VIEW TO SEIZING SOUTH VIETNAM.

RVN -- 32 PERCENT (40 RESPONDENTS INCLUDING EIGHT FARMERS, 12 OFFICE EMPLOYEES, NINE SERVICEMEN AND 11 NOTABLES) WHO EMPHASIZE THAT THE GOOD LIFE UNDER RVN WOULD ATTRACT THOSE UNDER COMMUNIST CONTROL.

NO COMMENT -- 20 PERCENT.  
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